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March 13, 2017

Statement of the Connecticut Food Association - Environmental Committee

Wayne Pesce, President, Connecticut Food Association

In opposition of *S.B. No. 995 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE REDUCTION OF CERTAIN LAND-BASED MARINE AND FRESHWATER DEBRIS.

The Connecticut Food Association (CFA) proudly advocates on behalf of the food retail industry. Its mission is to cultivate Connecticut's grocery industry through economic development, nutrition & wellness, environmental stewardship and community service. CFA membership covers the spectrum of diverse venues where food is sold, including single owner grocery stores, large supermarket chains, food distributors, food manufacturers, and specialty food purveyors.

On behalf of Connecticut's grocery retailers, I urge you to oppose SB 995 - To decrease several of the principal sources of marine debris in the state, including bottle caps, nip bottles, plastic straws, plastic utensils and cigarette butts and promote awareness of the problems caused by marine debris while providing educational information on how to minimize such marine debris.

This proposal is well intended based on the litter problem that exists in our states towns and cities. It is discouraging to see the result of littering of our neighborhoods, jogging or walking paths and work locations. The consequences of litter in a natural environment are even more upsetting. But this legislation will not provide the best solution to solving litter problems. We need stricter penalties, more education, public service materials, media coverage & more trash cans in public spaces in order to improve results. From Connecticut's jagged and rocky coastline to the narrow coastal lowlands, and central hills and low mountains of the north and west, we inherited a beautiful state. Our citizens must learn it is socially unacceptable to pollute the environment and fees on nuisance items in this proposal will not do enough to change people's societal values.

Improving Connecticut's environment and cleaning up litter in our communities is a worthy goal. CFA's members are committed to sound environmental policies that balance sustainability initiatives without increasing costs of doing business in the state. We support our states 2024 - 60percent diversion goals and are committed to doing our part to make Connecticut a better place to work, live and raise our families.